

Message Text

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PAGE 01 EC BRU 03236 020338Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OIC-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 SP-02 STR-04
TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 AF-08 EA-07 IO-13
NEA-10 USIA-06 OPIC-03 AGRE-00 AGR-05 /103 W
-----021341Z 023678 /43

R 011439Z APR 77
FM US MISSION EC BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3443
INFO AMEMBASSY SUVA
US MISSION OECD PARIS 4379
ALL EC CAPTIALS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE EC BRUSSELS 3236

PASS DEPT., ALSO FOR AID

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BGEN EAID EEC FJ
SUBJECT: EC/ACP MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE: PROPOSED AGENDA FOR APRIL
13-14 MEETING IN FIJI

REF: (A) EC BRUSSELS A-067, (B) 76 EC BRUSSELS A-463, (C) EC
BRUSSELS 2243, (D) 76 EC BRUSSELS 10679

1. SUMMARY: EC OFFICIALS HAVE DISCUSSED WITH THE MISSION LHE
MAJOR AGENDA ITEMS AND ISSUES WHICH WILL BE TAKEN UP AT THE
FORTHCOMING MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING OF THE EC AND
AFRICAN, PACIFIC AND CARIBBEAN (ACP) COUNTRIES OF THE LOME
CONVENTION. THE EC HOPES TO ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE AND
AVOID CONTENTIOUS ISSUES SUCH AS THE GUARANTEED PRICE FOR
ACP SUGAR IMPORTS. THIS MEETING WILL BRING TOGETHER SOME
60 MINISTERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD. END SUMMARY.

2. EC COMMISSION, PERMDEL AND COUNCIL SECRETARIATE OFFICIALS
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HAVE DISCUSSED WITH THE MISSION PLANS FOR THE ANNUAL EC/ACP
MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING IN FIJI ON APRIL 13-14. ABOUT
60 MINISTERS FROM THE 52 ACP COUNTRIES AND THE EC MEMBER
STATES, AS WELL AS EC COMMISSIONER CHEYSSON, ARE EXPECTED TO BE IN
ATTENDANCE. THE EC WILL EMPHASIZE THE SOLID ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LOME
CONVENTION: ALL ITS ASPECTS ARE IN PLACE AND ARE OPERATIONAL. THE
EC WILL ANNOUNCE THE FIRST TRANCHES OF 208 MILLION UNITS OF ACCOUNT

(MUA) OF REGIONAL PROJECTS (SEE REF A) AND OF STABEX TRANSFERS FOR 1976. THE EC HOPES TO AVOID CONTENTIOUS ISSUES, SUCH AS SUGAR ARRANGMENTS AND CHANGES IN STABEX. THE ACP'S, HOWEVER, ARE PRESSING HARD TO GAIN FURTHER EC CONCESSIONS ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MAIN AGENDA FOR THE MEETING.

3. TRADE ISSUES: THE ACP'S ARE SEEKING INCREASED EC PREFERENCES FOR ACP BANANA EXPORTS SO AS TO CHECK THE GROWING COMPETITION FROM "DOLLAR ZONE" BANANAS. THE ACP'S ALSO WANT FURTHER EC AID IN MARKETING THEIR BANANAS. THE ACP'S CONTINUE TO DISPUTE THE QUOTAS WHICH THE EC HAS ESTABLISHED FOR THEIR RUM EXPORTS. THEY ALSO WANT TO CONSULT WITH THE EC BEFORE IT APPLIES ITS PROPOSED REGULATION ON ALCOHOL. THE ACP'S ARE SEEKING EC HELP IN REDUCING THE AFLATOXIN CONTENT IN THEIR EXPORTS OF PEANUT PRODUCTS TO THE EC. THEY ALSO WANT TO OBTAIN REGULAR INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC IMPORTS UNDER THE EC GSP. THE ACP'S FEEL THE GSP IS ERODING THE CONVENTIONS TRADE PREFERENCES AND WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN A SURVEILLANCE OF THE GSP. THE ACP'S HAVE ASKED FOR PROMPT ACTION ON THE PROPOSED EUROPEAN TRADE COOPERATION AGENCY. (SEE REF B). THEY ALSO WANT TO INCLUDE EC TRADE COOPERATION MEASURES IN ACP INDICATIVE AID PROGRAMS.

4. STABEX: THE ACP'S ARE SEEKING TO EXPAND STABEX COVERAGE OF PRODUCTS TO INCLUDE COPPER, RUBBER, PHOSPHATE, CLOVES, VANILLA, AND SISEL. THEY ALSO WANT TO CHANGE THE REFERENCE PERIOD, PARTICULARLY FOR THE SAHEL COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE HAD THEIR NORMAL EXPORT LEVELS DISRUPTED BY THE DROUGHT. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMMISSION OFFICIALS SAY THEY WOULD PREFER TO DELAY ANY MAJOR CHANGES IN THE LOME STABEX UNTIL THEY BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS TO RENEW THE LOME CONVENTION.

5. SUGAR: THE ACP'S ARE SEEKING A HIGH GUARANTEED PRICE FOR THEIR PREFERENTIAL SUGAR EXPORTS WHICH WOULD BE COMPARABLE TO EC INTERNAL SUGAR PRICES. THE EC, HOWEVER, HAS NOT YET DECIDED ON ITS INTERNAL PRICE FOR THE NEXT MARKETING YEAR. IT CONSEQUENTLY WANTS TO PUT OFF ANY SUGAR PRICE NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL AFTER THE FIJI MEETING. SEVERAL ACP'S ARE COMPLAINING ABOUT THE EC DECISION TO UNILATERALLY ELIMINATE OR REDUCE THEIR PREFERENTIAL SUGAR QUOTAS BECAUSE OF THEIR FAILURE TO FULFILL THESE QUOTAS. THESE COUNTRIES DISPUTE THE EC'S AUTHORITY TO ACT UNILATERALLY.

6. ACP DUTIES AND RULES OF ORIGIN: A NUMBER OF ACP'S CURRENTLY IMPOSE DUTIES ON GOODS WHICH ARE FINANCED BY EC AID PROJECTS. THE EC IS SEEKING ACP AGREEMENT TO EXEMPT SUCH IMPORTS FROM CUSTOMS DUTIES. SEVERAL ACP'S ARE ALSO

ASKING FOR DEROGATIONS TO THE CONVENTION'S RULES OF ORIGINS
TO DETERMINE ELEIGIBILITY FOR PREFERENTIAL DUTIES.
THE EC IS RELUCTANT TO ALLOW EXCEPTIONS IN THIS AREA.HINTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 01-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ECBRU03236
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770114-0723
Format: TEL
From: EC BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770499/aaaadiky.tel
Line Count: 119
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 948107ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 EC BRUSSELS A-67, 76 EC BRUSSELS A-463
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2930144
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EC/ACP MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE: PROPOSED AGENDA FOR APRIL 13-14 MEETING IN FIJI
TAGS: BGEN, EAID, OCON, FJ, XT, XA, XP, XL, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/948107ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009